

# INDIAN AFFAIRS MANUAL

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**1.1 Purpose.** This part establishes management responsibilities, policies and procedures for the use and operation of aircraft within Indian Affairs.

**1.2 Policy.** Aircraft will be managed in accordance with all applicable regulations established by the Federal Aviation Administration and under the broad guidance specified by the Department of the Interior (DOI). Safe operations are paramount to flight support activities; all flight aviation management personnel share a key role in laying the groundwork for a safe operation.

**1.3 Exemptions or Waivers.** Exemptions or waivers to Indian Affairs or DOI aviation policy must be requested through the Indian Affairs National Aviation Program Manager.

## **1.4 Scope.**

**A. Application.** This part applies to the use of aircraft by all Indian Affairs personnel and, in accordance with independent memoranda of understanding with other Federal and state agencies, to cooperators using aircraft on reservations when their activity is in conjunction with a Bureau-operated program.

(1) When a cooperator's policy is more restrictive than this part, the cooperator's policy will apply.

(2) When a cooperator's policy is less restrictive than this part, this part will apply to the cooperator.

**B. Exclusion.** This part does not apply to tribal operations under Public Law 93-638 contracts, compacts, or cooperative agreements. Because many tribal aviation activities are related to interagency wildland fire operations, tribes are encouraged to meet DOI aviation policy standards so they may participate and cooperate with other partners in the interagency fire and aviation community.

## **1.5 Authority.**

**A. Title 5 U.S.C. §7902,** Programs to Prevent Accidents and Incidents Involving People and Property with Respect to the Operation of the Federal Government, Public Law 91-596;

**B. Title 29 U.S.C. §651, et seq. and 29 U.S.C. §1960,** Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 as amended, Public Law 91-596, which requires the head of each agency to develop and support activities to reduce injuries among employees and damage to property of the agency, to encourage safe practices and to eliminate hazards and risks in the work place;

**C. Title 49 U.S.C. §101,** Independent Safety Board Act Amendments of 1994, Public Law 103-411 (Public Aircraft Law);

**D. 14 CFR Part 91,** Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR);

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**E. 29 CFR Part 1960**, Basic Program Elements for Federal Employee Occupational Safety and Health Programs and Related Matters;

**F. 41 CFR Chapter 101, Part A-27**, Federal Property Management Regulations, Annual Aircraft and Aviation Cost Data; and

**G. Executive Order 12196**, Occupational Safety and Health Programs for Federal Employees.

## 1.6 Guidance.

### A. Office of Management and Budget (OMB):

(1) OMB Circular A-76, A Guide for Writing and Administering Performance Statements of Work for Service Contracts; and

(2) OMB Circular A-126, Use of Aircraft for Administrative Support Purposes, Criteria for Justification.

**B. Departmental Manual (DM).** Because the DOI is responsible for air crewmembers and passengers onboard aircraft under its operational control, the provisions of the DM, DOI handbooks and Office of Aircraft Services (OAS) operational procedure memoranda and information bulletins are incorporated by reference and are applicable to all Interior employees, individuals or groups providing volunteer services without compensation, or to any other persons supervised by DOI employees.

(1) Part 112, Chapter 12, Office of Aircraft Services;

(2) Part 350, Aviation Management, General Program Requirements;

(3) Part 351, Aviation Operations;

(4) Part 352, Aviation Safety; and

(5) Part 353, Aviation Services Provided by Office of Aircraft Services.

**C. Interagency Aviation Handbooks and Guides.** The following handbooks/guides have been formally adopted by Indian Affairs and are available by mail from the National Interagency Fire Center, Attn: Great Basin Cache Supply Office, 3833 S. Development Avenue, Boise, Idaho, 83075:

(1) Interagency Helicopter Operations Guide;

(2) Interagency Airspace Coordination Guide;

(3) Interagency Air Tanker Base Operations Guide;

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- (4) Aerial Ignition Systems Guide;
- (5) Interagency Single Engine Air Tanker Operations Guide; and
- (6) Interagency Rappel Guide.

**1.7 Responsibility.** Bureau aviation management responsibilities are outlined in Appendix 3 to 350 DM 1. Specific Indian Affairs management and staff positions have the following responsibilities in concert with those outlined in the DM.

**A. Director, Office of Trust Responsibilities:**

- (1) Establishes the overall Aviation Management and Safety Program policies including aircraft accident prevention;
- (2) Designates a Central Office manager to represent Indian Affairs on the DOI Aviation Board of Directors;
- (3) Provides appropriate resources for the education and training of staff, line managers, and field personnel as outlined in the DM Aviation User Training Program;
- (4) Designates a National Aviation Manager for Indian Affairs to serve at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC); and
- (5) Designates a National Aviation Safety and Training Manager serving at the NIFC under the National Aviation Manager.

**B. National Aviation Manager:**

- (1) Provides overall leadership and guidance to the Aviation Program, implementing DOI policy;
- (2) As requested, provides assistance to tribes operating compact/contract programs involving the use of aircraft;
- (3) Serves as the primary point of contact for the OAS and is a member of the DOI Aviation Board of Directors Working Team;
- (4) Ensures that Indian Affairs personnel are on OAS aircraft incident and accident investigation teams when mishaps involve Indian Affairs aviation activities;
- (5) Prepares and provides an annual report, in concert with Regional Aviation Managers, to the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs describing aviation activity, problems, opportunities for improvement, and issues;
- (6) Ensures timely feedback to line officers on aviation activities that have been reviewed or evaluated;

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(7) Pilots aircraft in conjunction with Indian Affairs and interagency partner operations; and

(8) Designates Regional Aviation Managers to serve at Geographical Area Coordination Centers in Albuquerque, NM, Denver, CO and Missoula, MT.

## **C. National Aviation Safety and Training Manager:**

(1) Ensures that Regional Aviation Managers and Area and Agency Collateral Duty Aviation Officers annually visit and review operations at all sites with exclusive-use aircraft contracts and visit each Area Office annually to review and provide guidance in the safety of aviation activities;

(2) Ensures, in conjunction with Regional Aviation Managers, that safety problems, issues or discrepancies in aviation operations are followed up in a timely manner;

(3) Maintains communications with the OAS Safety Office to ensure that there is timely follow up on Form OAS-34 Safety Communications (SAFECON) reports pertinent to Indian Affairs operations;

(4) Ensures, in cooperation with Regional Aviation Managers and Collateral Duty Area Aviation Officers, that employees involved in Indian Affairs aviation activities have the experience and training to meet DOI and interagency fire qualification standards;

(5) Works with OAS and other interagency partners to develop standard aviation training standards and materials; and

(6) Pilots aircraft in conjunction with Indian Affairs and interagency partner operations.

## **D. Regional Aviation Managers:**

(1) Provide technical aviation expertise to Area and Agency personnel, tribes and interagency partners;

(2) Review, evaluate and monitor aviation operations and, upon tribal request, review and evaluate tribal compact or contract programs;

(3) Participate in Indian Affairs aircraft incident and accident investigations and, upon tribal request, participate in tribal aircraft incident and accident investigations;

(4) Participate in interagency projects to develop or refine interagency aviation policy and procedures and serve as a focal point for Indian Affairs and tribal field level personnel on interagency policy and procedural issues;

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(5) Ensure that employees involved in Indian Affairs aviation activities have the experience and training to meet DOI and interagency fire qualification standards, and provide aviation management, operations and safety training to tribal and Indian Affairs personnel;

(6) Visit annually and review operations at all sites within the region having exclusive- use aircraft contracts and visit each Area Office annually to review and provide guidance in the safety of aviation activities. Provide timely advice to Area Directors and Agency Superintendents on aviation activity in their areas of responsibility;

(7) Ensure that discrepancies in operations and SAFECOM reports generated by Indian Affairs are followed up in a timely manner;

(8) Pilot aircraft in conjunction with Indian Affairs and interagency partner program operations; and

(9) Prepare and provide an annual report, in concert with the National Aviation Manager, to the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs describing aviation activity, problems, opportunities for improvement, and issues.

### **E. Area Directors:**

(1) Oversee all aviation program activities within their area of jurisdiction; and

(2) Designate a Collateral Duty Area Aviation Officer.

### **F. Collateral Duty Area Aviation Officers:**

(1) Refer aviation program issues and questions which cannot be dealt with locally to the Regional Aviation Manager;

(2) Apprise the Regional Aviation Manager of Area and Agency aviation training needs required to comply with DOI and interagency fire and aviation management programs;

(3) Coordinate with the Regional Aviation Manager to ensure that area aviation program needs are being met and that employees involved in Indian Affairs aviation activities have the experience and training to meet DOI and interagency fire qualification standards;

(4) Develop, with assistance from the Regional Aviation Manager, an Area Aviation Management Plan (see Chapter 2 of this Part) that deals with aircraft procurement and use authorization for their respective areas;

(5) Maintain a current set of aviation handbooks and manuals to help ensure safe and efficient operations;

(6) Advise Regional Aviation Managers when there are operations or safety issues in need of attention, and;

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(7) Attend both a DOI Aviation Management Seminar and a Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) training course during the first year of their appointment and, at a minimum, once every three years thereafter.

## **G. Agency Superintendents:**

(1) Plan and execute aviation activities within their jurisdictional area;

(2) Designate a Collateral Duty Agency Aviation Officer at locations with exclusive-use aircraft contracts. At locations without exclusive-use aircraft contracts, Superintendents may designate a Collateral Duty Agency Aviation Officer if they feel management and oversight of their local aviation activities requires one; and

(3) Appoint an Aviation Project Manager to serve as the on-site aircraft manager for special-use aviation projects within their jurisdictional area.

## **H. Collateral Duty Agency Aviation Officers:**

(1) Serve as the primary point of contact for Regional and Collateral Duty Area Aviation Managers;

(2) Serve as the primary point of contact for Agency employees with questions regarding aviation operations. Refer aviation program issues and questions which cannot be dealt with locally to the Collateral Duty Area Aviation Officer or Regional Aviation Manager;

(3) Advise Collateral Duty Area Aviation Officer or Regional Aviation Manager of agency training, operations or safety issues needing attention;

(4) Coordinate with the Collateral Duty Area Aviation Officer and Regional Aviation Manager to ensure that Agency aviation program needs are being met;

(5) Maintain a current set of aviation handbooks and manuals to help ensure safe and efficient operations; and

(6) Attend both a DOI Aviation Management Seminar and a COR training course during the first year of their appointment and, at a minimum, once every three years thereafter.

## **I. Aviation Project Managers:**

(1) Ensure that special-use aviation projects are afforded proper oversight and are conducted in compliance with DOI and Indian Affairs policy; and

(2) Manage end product aircraft contracts at the Agency involving various activities such as seeding operations and animal control efforts.

**J. Exclusive-Use Aircraft Managers:**

- (1) Ensure that aviation activities comply with DOI and Indian Affairs policy in all aspects of operations;
- (2) Serve as COR or Project Inspector (PI) on contracts for aircraft;
- (3) Maintain a current set of aviation handbooks and manuals to help ensure safe and efficient operations. Also, at locations with particular aviation activities such as helitac or retardant base operations, maintain additional guidance materials listed in 1.6C of this chapter;
- (4) Coordinate management of the exclusive-use aircraft program with the Agency Aviation Officer, Area Aviation Officer, Regional Aviation Manager, and National Aviation Manager; and
- (5) Maintain experience and training qualification standards required in adopted Interagency Aviation Handbooks and Guides.

**K. Flight Managers** (the senior passenger on-board an aircraft for a flight):

- (1) Ensure that the aircraft and pilot are carded for the type of flight to be made;
- (2) Ensure that personal protective equipment (PPE) is used when required, that training requirements for passengers or air crew members are met when required (e.g. special use) and that appropriate arrangements have been made for flight following; and
- (3) Ensure that the payment document for a flight is correctly processed.

## 2.1 Aviation Operations Plans.

**A. Area Aviation Management Plans** which, at a minimum, stipulate standard operating procedure for the acquisition and use of aircraft within the Area Office's jurisdiction and accident/incident reporting and response are required. Regional Aviation Managers will assist Collateral Duty Area Aviation Officers in the development of these plans.

**B. Aviation Operations Plans** (e.g. Helibase/Helicopter Operations Plans, Air Tanker Base or Air Tanker Operations Plans) which stipulate standard operating procedures for all aspects of base and flight activities are required at all Indian Affairs locations with exclusive-use contracts for aircraft.

**2.2 Program Monitoring.** Program monitoring will be used to provide program oversight and assistance, to ensure compliance with DOI and Indian Affairs policy and to help provide for the safety and efficiency of aviation operations.

**A. Formal Evaluations.** The aviation program in each Area will be formally evaluated at least once every five years. Such aviation program evaluations will be conducted by teams including the following personnel: the OAS Aviation Program Evaluation Specialist, Indian Affairs National Program Aviation Managers and Collateral Duty Aviation Officers. Interagency partners from other aviation communities may also be included on the team. Findings from such evaluations will be documented in a report issued by OAS.

**B. Annual Monitoring.** Aviation activity will be monitored through visits to sites with aviation activity by the Indian Affairs National Aviation Program staff (includes National Program Manager, National Safety and Training Program Manager, and Regional Aviation Managers). Such visits will be on an annual or as-needed basis to provide for the safety and efficiency of operations.

(1) At a minimum, at least one staff member will visit each Area Office annually and will visit each location with an exclusive-use aircraft contract annually to review operations.

(2) National Aviation Program staff will visit locations on the first year of a three-year exclusive-use aircraft contract to attend the prework meeting. Visits may be more frequent if requested or if circumstances warrant.

**C. Outside Technical Assistance.** When requested by Indian Affairs, subject matter experts from other agencies (i.e. Forest Service Helicopter Operations Specialists, etc.) may be used to monitor or assist with operations.



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**3.1 Aircraft Accident Prevention.** Managers and staff personnel at all levels are responsible for aircraft accident prevention and are required to manage the risks inherent to aviation operations. All Indian Affairs aircraft users and managers will ensure that, at a minimum, the following factors are given due consideration prior to flight. Anyone (passenger, air crew member or pilot) can cancel or terminate a flight without fear of repercussion.

- A. Flight and project planning**, including risk assessment performed;
- B. Job experience and training** requirements for mission personnel met;
- C. Wire strike preventive measures** taken;
- D. Aviation life support and personal protective equipment** used as required;
- E. Flight following** performed;
- F. Calculations** of aircraft weight and load balance performed;
- G. Aircraft and pilot approved** (carded) for project; and
- H. Airspace management coordination** performed if there is a potential for conflict.

**3.2 Aircraft Pilot Training.** As part of the aviation safety program, Indian Affairs employees in the 2181 or 2101 job series are required to meet the following requirements to pilot aircraft in conjunction with their position. These requirements are complementary and in addition to those required by the DM for DOI pilots.

**A. Fixed-wing pilots.** To fly fixed-wing aircraft that require a specific pilot rating, pilots must annually attend an authorized professional simulator training facility for emergency, instrument and equipment training.

**B. Rotor-wing pilots.** To fly rotor-wing aircraft, pilots must:

- (1) Annually attend either rotor-wing factory training or an authorized professional simulator training facility for emergency, equipment and, when applicable, instrument training; and
- (2) Attend the National Helicopter Mountain Flying Course prior to initial qualification to fly helicopters. This is a one-time requirement.

### **3.3 Aircraft Incident and Accident Reporting.**

**A. Incident Reporting.** All aviation incidents will be reported to the OAS Safety Office within 24 hours of occurrence. SAFECOM reports on incidents will also be provided to the Area Aviation Officer, the Agency Aviation Officer and the Regional Aviation Manager.

**B. Accident Reporting.** All aviation accidents will be reported immediately to the local line officer, the OAS Safety Office and an Indian Affairs National Aviation Program staff member.

### **3.4 Aircraft Incident and Accident Investigations.**

**A. Incident Investigations.** Incidents determined to be "with potential" (that is, those exhibiting factors that could contribute to an accident) shall be investigated on site by an OAS representative and an Indian Affairs National Aviation Program staff member. Routine incidents determined to be "without potential" shall be followed up by National Aviation Program staff members or other aviation specialists, as appropriate.

**B. Accident Investigations.** The complexity of an accident will be the determining factor on the number and type of investigators needed for the investigation. There will be at least one National Aviation Program staff member on the investigation team investigating Indian Affairs aircraft accidents.

**3.5 Indian Affairs Aviation Safety Awards.** In addition to normal performance awards available through the personnel system, the Indian Affairs National Aviation Program will provide the following awards to employees working with aircraft to provide an incentive to practice safety in the Aviation Program.

**A. Sustained Outstanding Helitac Aviation Safety Award** for three consecutive seasons of accident free helitac operations and superior preparedness and performance as documented in reports on annual helibase or helicopter operations preparedness inspections. This is a cash award for helicopter managers and helicopter crew members.

**B. Exceptional Contribution to the Indian Affairs or DOI Aviation Safety Program** for a significant act contributing to aviation safety in Indian Affairs or DOI that resulted in improved safety or avoidance of an aircraft accident. The amount of award will be commensurate with the act.

**C. Procedures.** To be considered for either award, nominations should be submitted through the local line officer to the National Aviation Program Manager, NIFC, by October 31. Award nomination packages must identify the type of award being sought and contain documentation justifying the award. Review and recommendation for awards will be performed by the National Aviation Program staff; approval will be by the Director, Office of Trust Responsibilities.